

# Indian Education for All

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Model Lesson Plan for Teaching About Uses of  
Tobacco – both Traditional and Commercial.  
Includes Tobacco Facts and  
Promotes Media Literacy.



Many American Indian tribal nations and Indian people use tobacco for ceremonial purposes. Not all tribes may use tobacco in the same way but in general it is used for ceremony. Some tribal nations may be more open to explaining how they use tobacco for ceremonial purposes and other tribal nations may have cultural protocols regarding tobacco use that aren't shared with the general public.

## ***Buffalo and Porcupine***

Northern Cheyenne Trickster Story

Told by Phillip Whiteman, Jr.

Illustrated by Cory Wheeler

Running time 0:5:15:00

*Buffalo and Porcupine* has a powerful message and gives the listeners an opportunity to reflect upon their own relationships with people; the consequences of individual choices; and how a traditional story can relate to our modern world.

This project was produced in collaboration between Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Tobacco Use Prevention Project and the Office of Public Instruction, Indian Education for All. There is a lesson plan following the video that facilitates discussion and draws comparisons between traditional American Indian tobacco use and commercial tobacco use.

## **Health Enhancement Model Lesson Plan – Examining Traditional Ethics and Uses of Tobacco**

**Suggested Grade Levels: Middle School – High School**

### **LESSON PLAN INTRODUCTION**

Evidence of tobacco use among American Indian tribes dates back as early as 3000 B.C. Today many American Indian tribal nations and Indian people continue to use tobacco for ceremonial purposes. Not all tribes may use tobacco in the same way but in general it is used for ceremony and reserved for special or sacred occasions.

Some tribal nations may be more open to how they use tobacco for ceremonial purposes and other tribal nations may have cultural protocols regarding tobacco use that are not shared with the general public.

*Traditional tobacco is a gift from Mother Earth. It should be respected and used properly just like sweetgrass, sage, and cedar. Tobacco is a medicine used by our people to pray with. It provides us with spiritual strength, guidance, discipline and protection. You should never abuse such a gift.* – <http://www.keepitsacred.org/network/>

Commercial tobacco, on the other hand, is used recreationally, individually and habitually. Tobacco companies have long used Native American images and targeted this population group in order to sell their deadly product. Affecting more lives in America annually than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, illegal drugs and fires combined, tobacco use is the single greatest cause of preventable death! Smoking kills 1,400 Montanans every year, an average of 4 per day. (See attached appendix.)

Please keep in mind these relevant “Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians” as you teach about tobacco prevention and traditional use among American Indians:

### **Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians**

#### Essential Understanding 1

There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

#### Essential Understanding 2

There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by many entities, organizations and people. There is a continuum of Indian identity ranging from assimilated to traditional and is unique to each individual. There is no generic Indian.

#### Essential Understanding 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

### **Health Enhancement Standards:**

Montana Health Enhancement Standards and Benchmarks for grade 8:

Health Content Standard 1—Have a basic knowledge and understanding of concepts that promote comprehensive health.

Health Content Standard 5—Demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking and decision making to enhance health.

### **Relevant Benchmarks:**

- Apply problem-solving processes to health issues
- Health related decisions are influenced by the attitudes and values of individuals, families and community
- Identify the validity of health information and how culture, media and technology influence choices
- Explain relationship between positive behaviors and prevention
- Explain the function and maintenance of body systems
- Analyze how peers, family, heredity and environment influence personal health
- Explain personal health strategies

## **Stage One**

### **Established Goals:**

Use a traditional American Indian Story and apply the lessons learned to making positive health choices for today. Analyze comparisons between Buffalo's choice to carry Porcupine and his ultimate demise/eventual death. Compare Porcupine to commercial tobacco companies.

### **Understandings:**

Students will explore how commercial tobacco companies market to youth, target population groups, specific cultural groups and look for ways to increase market research.

Students compare how commercial tobacco use is portrayed to be a "friend."

### ***Students will be able to...***

- Have classroom discussions
- Brainstorm ideas and make comparisons
- Explore examples of media literacy
- Research background information on contemporary tobacco political control
- Research traditional tobacco use among various American Indian Tribal Nations and/or individuals using tobacco for ceremony

### **Essential Questions:**

- Life choices sometimes present dilemmas.
- Something that may seem benign or harmless can change your health and your life.
- What can we learn from stories, even if they do not pertain to present day situations?

### ***Students will know...***

- Tobacco companies are there to make a profit.
- Tobacco companies will use current trends, cultural activities, and also utilize research regarding human behavioral patterns to sell their product.

## **Stage Two**

### **Performance Tasks**

Watch and analyze/discuss a traditional Northern Cheyenne trickster story told by Phillip Whiteman a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

Relate the story to current tobacco use prevention issues (applicable for other current issues as well).

Understand commercial tobacco companies' marketing strategies.

## **Stage Three**

### **Learning Activities**

Watch the on-line video of Phillip Whiteman telling the story *Buffalo and Porcupine*

The Buffalo & Porcupine video can be accessed at this site:

<http://opi.mt.gov/Streamer/IndianEd/BufferloPorcupine.mp4>

Follow with a classroom discussion using these suggested talking points:

- a. What was the story about? How does Phillip Whiteman use the terms “friend” and “relative” and how do these compare with your own definitions? Would traditional tobacco be a friend or relative? What about commercial tobacco?
- b. So what? How can this pertain to you and current issues? Can you see a comparison with commercial tobacco companies and other companies marketing unhealthy substances to youth?

<b>Elements in Story</b>	Initial meeting between Porcupine and Buffalo	Crossing river, what is inside Buffalo’s body	Porcupine’s curiosity to know everything outside body	Buffalo’s demise. Lessons learned
<b>Relation to Commercial Tobacco</b>	Social interaction, trust, friendship. Ritual around smoking, desire to fit in.	Tobacco use can lead to cancers and heart disease. Two leading causes of death in US.	Tobacco companies do research in populations to better understand how to market their product.	Tobacco company CEO’s aren’t with you in the hospital when you are dying of lung cancer. Your relatives are!

- c. Now what? How do peers, family, and environment influence personal health? What are some personal health enhancing strategies?
- d. Further exploration, have students research one of the aspects/issues discussed utilizing the supplemental materials and resources:
  - New FDA regulation and laws pertaining to tobacco use
  - 2012 Surgeon Generals’ Report
  - Media Literacy and tobacco advertising
  - Social marketing and company donations
  - Environmental impact of commercial tobacco
  - Traditional tobacco use among American Indian tribes
  - Short and long term health effects

# Appendix I

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## Native American Ethical Behavior, Gabriella Many Shots

MSW Practicum Student Intern

As Native People, we have an obligation to nature. As Native people we believe everything in our universe has a spirit. Everything in our world is a living thing. Because of our belief, we are obligated to take care of these living beings. This does not mean we own the land, only that we are its care-taker. This environment is the earth and all that inhabit it. It includes the water, the animals, and plant life.

Our grandfathers were aware of this relationship with the land; they understood the importance of taking care of Mother Earth. To take care of the land and its surroundings, they practiced *Ethical Behavior*. This unique relationship was guided by a code of ethics. Our ancestor's lives were guided by values and belief systems. A large part of this value system was *Gratitude*. Historically, Native Americans were a thankful people. They consistently and constantly gave thanks for all they were able to acquire. This meant they gave thanks to animals for giving their lives, as food, to nourish the people. They gave thanks to the heavens for rain, snow, sunshine and thunder for sustaining their lives with water and warmth. They thanked the trees for the wood that kept them warm and the shrubs that were used for sweat-lodges. They gave thanks to the various roots and herbs used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. There are many things they were thankful for.

Native American people also practiced reciprocity. *Reciprocity* is a relationship involving mutual exchange. A reciprocal relationship or act happens when something is done mutually or in return. Traditionally, Indian People offered tobacco as gifts to the land, water, plant-life whenever something was taken for their purposes. This form of behavior assured the people, sustenance, for their livelihood. They were careful not to take too much of anything, and were taught just to take enough. Everyone knew if too much was taken, there would be less for next time or there would be less for other people in need.

So this *Ethical Behavior* we have with the land and its beings, means offering tobacco as a gift. Whenever we take from Mother Earth, we also need to give back to her. Whether it is a rock, mint leaves, sweet-grass or a feather, we need to give something back. This something is tobacco and prayer. Anything we take from nature, we need to remember to practice *Ethical Behavior* and offer tobacco and prayer. When we offer tobacco with prayer, it ensures we'll always have plenty for next time. There will always be an abundance to go around, for the people, if we practice *Ethical Behavior*.

## Supplemental Materials and Resources

[Montana Health Standards and Benchmarks](#), 8<sup>th</sup> grade (#1, #5, #7)

### [Grade 8 Health Enhancement Lessons](#)

Tobacco Lessons (p.31, p.35, p.37)

Tobacco Handouts and Information (p.103-109)

Youth Risk Behavioral Survey results

[Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program](#) website, local community and tribal contacts

Presentations

Information

Fact Sheets

Prevention Needs Assessment Survey statistics

[Tobacco Free Kids](#) website, national issues

FDA regulations

2012 Surgeon General's Report

[Traditional Tobacco](#) - [Keep it Sacred](#) website

Ethical Behaviors – (Appendix I)

Industry marketing – ([Appendix II](#)) More information can be found at this site.

Colorado Spiritual Tobacco – easy reference sheet on traditional vs. commercial  
([Appendix III](#))

<http://www.medicinewheelmodel.com/>

Special thanks to Phillip Whiteman (Northern Cheyenne) for granting DPHHS and OPI permission to record and share the story of *Buffalo and Porcupine*.